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1. Zum dritten Mal innerhalb eines Jahres: Wahlen in Israel

Genau zwei Wochen vor Beginn des Korruptionsprozesses gegen den rechtskonservativen Ministerpräsidenten Benjamin Netanyahu wurden Israels mündige Bürger_innen am 2. März erneut an die Wahlurnen gerufen. Es ist die dritte Wahl innerhalb eines Jahres. Der 70-jährige Netanyahu strebt trotz der Vorwürfe eine fünfte Amtszeit an. Israel steckt seit einem Jahr in einer politischen Krise. Nach den ersten zwei Wahlen im April und September 2019 scheiterte die Regierungsbildung infolge einer Patt-situation zwischen dem Mitte-Links-Lager unter der Führung des früheren Generalstabschefs Benny Gantz von der Parteienliste Blau-Weiß und dem rechts-religiösen Lager. Zwar konnte Netanyahus Likud bei der jetzigen Wahl nach Auszählung von 99,8% der Stimmen vier Sitze zulegen, jedoch hat sein rechts-religiöser Block lediglich 58 Mandate und damit drei Mandate zu wenig für die notwendige Mehrheit in der israelischen Knesset. Das Mitte-Links Lager kommt einschließlich der auf den historischen Höchstwert von 15 Mandaten angewachsenen Vereinigten Arabischen Liste auf lediglich 55 Mandate. Avigdor Liberman bleibt daher mit seiner Partei Yisrael Beiteanu mit seinen sieben Mandaten trotz des Verlusts von einem Parlamentssitz Zünglein an der Waage. Da Liberman jedoch bereits angekündigt hat, weder mit den ultra-orthodoxen Parteien noch mit der Vereinigten Arabischen Liste koalieren zu wollen, befindet sich die israelische

Politik weiterhin in einer Sackgasse und ein vierter Gang zu den Wahlurnen kann nicht ausgeschlossen werden.

The Joint List: The No Choice Party

Time after time the Israeli public, and the courts as well, are forced to discuss the pearls of wisdom coming from the mouths of members of the Joint Arab List (...) we hear evasive and stuttered explanations, according to which the comments that were said or written were simply misunderstood or taken out of context, and that the persons involved are against the use of any type of violence. (...) it must be understood that these are not just slips of the tongue or fumbles, but a sequence of expressions that assert a dedication to the Palestinian narrative. (...) Abbas also tends to stutter or disappear every time he is required to condemn acts of terror (...). Constraints on the PA have led Abbas to conclude that from a tactical perspective, the use of terror is not useful and even detrimental. But this is not a completely moral denial of violence, and we will never catch Abbas condemning acts of terror against Israeli soldiers in Judea and Samaria, seeing as how the Palestinian public and Abbas in his heart of hearts believe it is legitimate. This is precisely why he calls the terrorists "shahids" and pays salaries to their families. The members of the Joint List mostly adhere to this narrative, and it is the basis for their claims and deeds. This is why when their lawmakers call Samir Kuntar a shahid it is not a

one-time slip of the tongue or pen. However, there is no denying that the adoption of the Palestinian narrative by members of the Joint List opens a wide gap between those who support them and the Israeli public. The Arab public in Israel supports the Joint List not necessarily because it blindly accepts its platform, but because it is the only political force that represents it and pretends to take care of its needs. This fact is testimony to the failure of the Zionist parties to recruit and integrate the Arabs in Israel. Integrating Arab Israelis into all aspects of Israeli life, as citizens with equal rights and obligations, is the way to bridge the gap and push the Palestinian narrative from the discourse of Israeli Arabs to the fringes.

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 16.02.20

Ahead of Israel's third elections, both sides exclude Arabs

The third round of elections has turned into a third round of slogans aimed at excluding parts of Israel. Despite the promise of a “positive campaign” by Likud officials, once again, the main campaign slogan of the Likud is “Without the Arab Joint List, Gantz can't form a government.” (...) The High Court of Justice has addressed this issue. In the previous two rounds of elections – and now again for the upcoming one – it was asked to decide whether Balad as a party, or some of its members individually, can run for Knesset seats. The court has weighed MKs' expressions and decided that even though they are very close to the redline, they have not crossed it. (...) the Joint List is the sole representative of the 20% of citizens who are Arabs. And in a democracy, their votes are no different than a vote by a Jewish Israeli. In addition, the Arab minority is rapidly changing. Polls show more Arabs want to take an active part in society. Writing off the Joint List essentially writes off the entire Arab public, and campaigning against the legitimacy of the Joint List is essentially a campaign against a Jewish-Arab joint future in Israel. Parties should actually want to add Arab parties into their coalitions. This is the best way to create a real partnership and get Arab-Isrealis to feel that they are part and parcel of the State of Israel. Joined by real reforms in the Arab sector, this could dramatically change the country. It is time to stop the campaign against 20% of the citizens of this country. Political disagreements are part of any government, but division over ethnicity should not be allowed. It is time for this to come to an end.

Editorial, JPO, 19.02.20

Election tie would be as good as a victory for Netanyahu

(...) Benjamin Netanyahu (...) eliminated the rules of the game. (...) Never before has Israel had a prime minister who turned the attorney general, a confidant whom he chose for the position, into a target for attacks by failed politicians. Never before was there a prime minister who assailed the country's Arab minority and its elected representatives as if they were a gang of traitors. He has called the legal system “leftist,” and the media too, although most of it is in thrall to him. Netanyahu fights his rivals the way rivals always fought, but he distorted the voice of his opponents and neutered their messages. (...) When there are no rules, the arena is defective, the game is rigged. (...) Netanyahu has an achievable goal. His rivals: not so much. His rivals want a change in government. The change they are promising isn't a radical one – not in the idea of the Jewish and democratic state and not in the program for a negotiated peace agreement – but they are united in their desire to oust a corrupt government, to restore the full range of democracy and the rule of law. To establish that the political game has rules. This desire by Netanyahu's rivals has come up against a paralyzing political stalemate. Breaking this stalemate will be much harder than analysts predict. Netanyahu prefers this tie to a weak victory; the tie is his triumph, and the failure of his opponents. (...) In the event of such a tie, Netanyahu will remain a caretaker prime minister. (...) Kahol Lavan must distinguish itself from Likud in the security arena, its determination to reach a just arrangement with the Palestinians. It must warn of the danger to democracy of electing a man who has been charged with corruption. The latter doesn't matter to Netanyahu's large base, but it does to a large number of undecided right-wing voters who are wrestling with the question of replacing him. (...)

Uzi Baram, HAA, 17.02.20

The Left is counting on right-wing apathy

Right-wing voters must not think that if they do not come to the polling stations (...) they are not casting a ballot. (...) Their decision to skip the short walk to the polling station may actually contribute to a historic gain for the Joint Arab List. (...) The minor spike of about 1.5% in voter turnout between April and September can be misleading. What contributed to it mostly were Arab voters, whose turnout rose from 50% to 60% in September. (...) The nationalist camp should be concerned about what is going on in the Likud and religious-Zionist strongholds. Alt-

though there was no turnout change in these areas between April and September, it was still low at only 65%, compared to 72% in Blue and White strongholds. Is it inevitable? Recent history shows it is not. Let us go back and recall a battle that seemed lost, on the eve of the 2015 elections against the Zionist Union. (...) National-religious voters are in an even worse state. This is a group that consistently votes at the highest rates in the country, higher than the ultra-Orthodox. The classic national religious areas have always seen a turnout of over 80%. However, between April and September, these strongholds saw the largest relative decrease, of nearly 3%. (...) sometimes that small drop is exactly what's missing in order to secure those critical seats for the bloc. Knesset elections are not like choosing a life partner or friends. For most voters, elections are a lesser evil. Right-wingers should think about the future consequences of their vote. And the only absolute, relevant consequence is the formation of a right-wing government or a left-wing government. Therefore, voting for allegedly the most right-wing party, Jewish Power, which will not pass the threshold, is a vote for the Left. Period. Staying at home due to apathy or some kind of protest against the other candidate you do not like will give more weight to the Left, and therefore constitute a vote for the Left. (...)

Prof. Asher Cohen, IHY, 27.02.20

Will Israel's third elections be the last?

Sometimes it is hard to even remember how we got here. How did Israel, a country known for its resilience, grit and creativity, find itself in an endless electoral loop? How did the nation become so polarized, so paralyzed, so divided? (...) One politician writes off 20% of Israel's citizens and refers to Israeli-Arabs in terms no different than are used by some of the antisemites in Europe. Another writes off haredim as if they were not part of his people. Sadly, this is what happens when the country remains in an endless election cycle and political deadlock. People lose sight of what is really at stake. (...) If you simply listen to Benjamin Netanyahu all day, you would believe that Israeli-Arabs are a fifth column, and enemies of the state no different than the Iranians, Hezbollah or Hamas. That their vote is worth the same as a Jewish Israeli's vote makes no difference.

That all polls show Israeli-Arabs yearning for greater integration into general society also means nothing. For now, Netanyahu needs an enemy, and the Arabs are who he has. The way Netanyahu talks about

Benny Gantz is no less damaging. Regardless of how you feel about his politics, Gantz is a man who has served the state with distinction as a soldier, commander and IDF chief of staff. Making fun of the way he might stumble on a word or occasionally stutter – even though he really doesn't – should be a Red Line that is not crossed. (...) While Gantz might have toned down his criticism of the haredim this election cycle, it is hard to forget the way he spoke about them ahead of the vote in September, when he was pushing a “secular unity government” – haredim were not wanted. Gantz commented last week that he would form a government with a “Jewish majority.” Imagine someone running for office in a European country calling for a “Christian majority” – Jews or Muslims are not welcome. How would that feel? It is almost as if Israel has lost its moral compass.

For this ugly negativity to come to an end, the election cycle needs to end. (...) The citizens of Israel have more power than they think. Voting is just one demonstration. Making it abundantly clear to the politicians that another stalemate or deadlock will not be tolerated is another. This country is not a game or someone's personal fiefdom. It belongs to the people, and it is time we say that loud and clear. Yaakov Katz, JPO, 28.02.20

2. Coronavirus erreicht Israel

Angesichts der weltweiten Ausbreitung des Coronavirus rät Israels Regierung von Reisen ins Ausland ab. Bis auf weiteres sollen zudem keine nicht-israelischen Reisenden aus Italien mehr ins Land gelassen werden. Die Regelung gilt bereits für Reisende aus China, Japan, Südkorea, Thailand, Singapur und Hongkong. In Israel wurden jüngst die ersten Fälle von Erkrankungen gemeldet. Aus Sorge vor einer Verbreitung des Coronavirus durften keine Läufer aus dem Ausland am Marathon in Tel Aviv teilnehmen. Ursprünglich hatten nach Informationen der Stadtverwaltung 3000 Sportler aus aller Welt an dem Lauf teilnehmen wollen. Der Marathon in Tel Aviv gilt als eins der größten Sportereignisse auf internationaler Ebene. In diesem Jahr gingen 40 000 israelische Läufer an den Start. Die ausländischen Sportler sollen ihr Startgeld zurückerstattet bekommen.

Israel is simply not prepared to fight coronavirus

Growing public awareness of the spread of the coronavirus and the obvious pressure to prevent it reaching Israel at any cost has (...) placed those

returning from countries where the virus has taken hold in a tough situation. How they will leave the airport, banned as they are from public transport? Where they will complete their compulsory two-week quarantine? Who will bring them provisions? These are not questions that the Health Ministry can answer. (...) The uncertainty (...) has led to extreme and unforgivable reactions, such as the removal from school of children whose parents have returned from one of these countries or being publicly denounced as dangerous, as happened to the young children of soccer player Eran Zahavi. Instead of trying to calm the population and provide responsible and thoughtful explanations of the steps needed to prevent the spread of the disease, which would create the public commitment that is essential to fighting the virus, the Health Ministry itself has been in a state of hysteria. (...) there will be a hotline for concerned citizens to report any neighbors they believe are violating their terms of their quarantine. Furthermore, there will apparently be eight roving inspectors who will pay surprise visits to the hundreds of people in quarantine in an attempt to ensure that they really are in isolation. These creative yet utterly unfeasible initiatives give rise to suspicions that there are people in power who are deliberately fanning the flames of panic. For there is nothing like a good biological apocalypse to divert attention from a crippling political impasse endless or the criminal proceedings hanging over the heads of various senior members of the government. And this situation could be amusing were it not for its severity. (...) Tens of thousands of people have been infected and nearly 2,000 have died. Senior doctors have been warning for weeks that Israel is simply not prepared for a scenario of mass infection. With the absence of stringent isolation conditions, sufficient medical staff and even respirators needed to treat patients in critical condition, Israel's healthcare system may find itself in an unprecedented situation in which it must decide who gets helped and who is left to fight this virus alone. The current pandemonium is just the first taste of what is likely to come. If this is the state of affairs before the virus even reaches Israel, it is terrifying to imagine what will happen once the first patient is diagnosed. Sarit Rosenblum, YED, 18.02.20

Coronavirus, a national mission

Israel has managed to deal with epidemics and epidemiological crises before. Just in the last decade the healthcare system has had to deal with bird flu, polio, measles and other diseases that endanger

public health. Now it is facing the coronavirus – or by its official name, COVID-19. (...) Although more than two months have passed since the outbreak began in China, and the number of confirmed infections has reached 70,000 people worldwide, we still do not know how long the incubation period is, among other things. The development of a vaccine against the virus is also quite a long way off – a year or more. Because of the uncertainties, Israel must prepare for the worst-case scenario. (...) the most important part of the preparations depends on proper infrastructure, detailed plans and drills of emergency procedures in the healthcare system and outside of it. The more time that passes, the more criticism emerges, and the great neglect of the public healthcare system in recent years is revealed. So are various other disturbing failings, beginning with unpreparedness at Ben-Gurion International Airport, which according to experts lacks essential infrastructure for testing for corona and bringing in suspected patients to quarantine – and no plan of action exists in that area. Family doctors in the community also lack knowledge and are fearful. There are doubts about the functioning of the trains, public transportation in general, the school system and other essential services, and about the readiness of the economy for a situation in which corona keeps many people in isolation. The Health Ministry is leading the preparedness effort, but the crisis has significance that extends well beyond the area of healthcare and medicine; it touches the economy and the public in many ways. Israel must use the time it has left before the coronavirus gets here to improve readiness. Preparedness for a corona outbreak must be a national mission. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 19.02.20

A lesson from the coronavirus on the fragility and strength of humanity

The outbreak of the coronavirus is a deeply troubling and potentially dangerous development but within it we can find lessons that are important for our spirituality and our role in this world. Throughout Tanach, we can find two very different but complementary descriptions of humans and human nature. On the one hand, we are defined as created in the image of God, “only slightly less than divine.” This characterization would lead one to think that humans are created to be “near-perfect.” Yet on the other hand, we know that the Torah makes it very clear that we are subject to failures and weaknesses. These dueling identities are revealed in very practical terms when we are forced to confront something so vast

and challenging like this outbreak of disease. On the one hand, the coronavirus is a tiny living organism that can spread a terrible disease throughout humanity – while at the same time, we know that we have the potential to harness the power to develop the vaccine to stop it. (...) Typically, we fear giant threats – earthquakes and storms that can destroy in seconds. In this case, the fear is no less present, but in a very different form. It stems from the sense of not knowing from where it is coming and where it might head. Is the person next to us a carrier? Is that sneeze something far more dangerous and sinister? Yet, the appearance of this disease also reminds us of the incredible inherent strength of humanity. It reminds us of the passionate humanitarianism of the medical community that must risk their own lives to save others. And of the power of medical science, driven by the minds of men and women who are now desperately searching for a vaccine that will fight the disease. (...) In the coronavirus we are able to better understand how fragile human life can be, whereby a tiny organism originating in the Far East can so quickly grow and spread to impact communities so far away. And at the same time, we must find strength in the recognition that we have tools to confront this disease that, with God's help, will see its end very soon. (...)

Yuval Chelrow, JPO, 19.02.20

Corona will eventually be dethroned

(...) our sages have taught us that when a plague is released, it does not distinguish between the righteous and the sinners. When the plague begins to pick people off at the very outskirts of the camp, no one is keeping an eye on the details; all they are interested in is the Coronavirus. They are terrified of it. (...) Modern man has learned to believe in the power of science – scientific theories explained everything for him. And now Coronavirus shows up and upsets everything. (...) The mystery and lack of knowledge about it increase the fear and panic. So do the rumors. (...) The fear of coronavirus rests on psycho-historical foundations deep in the European psyche. In the 14th century, the Black Plague struck the continent, and in six years wiped out about one third of its residents. (...) one public event after another is being cancelled. People are avoiding public gatherings, soccer games are being postponed, the theaters are empty, and ahead of Shabbat, the question arises of whether public prayer is a health hazard or those who are fulfilling commandments will avoid harm. (...) The virus might weaken and fade away (...). As of now, we must take care to

avoid needless panic. The truth is our best friend. We must not accept any report as the gospel truth; we should verify it against a number of sources, and follow updated from the government ministries. Eventually, the Coronavirus will be dethroned, and the just, healing sun will shine its rays and purify the good land.

Dror Eydar, IHY, 25.02.20

The long-term effects of the coronavirus

(...) the idea of a mysterious new disease spreading from country to country plays on humanity's deepest fears. Given both the physical and psychological impacts of this novel coronavirus, it is time to examine its potential long-term effects on a global scale. One potential effect may be to alter global trends in the way in which almost everything we use is produced. The supply chains for innumerable products have become increasingly global and interconnected. China accounts for approximately 27% of the world's manufacturing output. Together with South Korea, the two countries account for over 30% of global manufacturing.

(...) China is one of the world's major producers of raw materials for the pharmaceutical industry as well. (...) If COVID-19, or panic over COVID-19 in Asia continues to spread, this will have far-reaching consequences for the global supply chain. Already today there is a counter-trend to the globalization of supply chains. The fourth industrial revolution, which includes the growth of autonomous smart factories, together with rising wages in China, and international trade wars, is decreasing the gap in production costs between China and the West. (...) The psychological and practical impact of the disruption in supply chains due to COVID-19 may accelerate the reversal of the grand trend of supply chain globalization. This would have a major impact on the future of the global economy. Another long-term effect of the current coronavirus epidemic is its impact on the future of megacities. (...) While much of the focus in the international discourse over the future of such cities has focused on issues like smart transportation, sustainability and food security, public health will be a major issue as well. If a new disease like COVID-19 were to take root in such a city, it could potentially spread to hundreds of thousands of people within a short time. (...) we may well see a move toward virtual business conferences. In terms of conveying information, there is no need to physically attend a conference venue. (...) On a grand scale, the coronavirus, by discouraging travel and potentially reversing trends in supply chain globalization,

is driving people apart. In another sense, it is bringing people together. Coronaviruses do not discriminate based on nationality or religion. They touch on our most basic human condition and human fears. Understanding the disease, slowing its spread and developing a vaccination, will require intense international cooperation. If Israeli technology were to play some role in providing a cure to COVID-19 or a solution to its spread, it is hard to imagine even the most fanatical regimes and BDS (...) activists rejecting its use. (...) Whatever our differences, viruses like COVID-19 know no borders. We are all in this fight together.

Asher Fredman, JPO, 27.02.20

3. Bernie Sanders und Israel

Bernie Sanders, Spitzenkandidat unter den demokratischen Präsidentschaftsbewerbern, wäre der erste jüdische Präsident in der Geschichte der USA. Trotzdem sorgt der 77-Jährige, dessen Familie zahlreiche Angehörige im Holocaust verlor, ausgerechnet in Israel für Unmut, allen voran bei dem noch amtierenden Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu. Ihn schimpfte Sanders einen „reaktionären Rassisten“. Die Einladung zur Jahresversammlung der AIPAC, der größten pro-israelischen Lobby in den USA, sagte er jüngst kurzerhand ab und begründete, dass die AIPAC auch jenen eine Bühne ermögliche, die sich gegen die grundlegenden Rechte der Palästinenser starkmachen. Soziale Gerechtigkeit liegt Sanders am Herzen. Zu der bedingungslosen Unterstützung der israelischen Politik will er sich nicht hergeben. Die USA sollten als ehrlicher Makler zwischen den Konfliktparteien vermitteln, findet er.

Can Democrats survive Bernie Sanders?

(...) The Democratic Party is in a pickle. If their leading candidate, Bernie Sanders, wins the nomination, they'll have to pray against all odds that a far-left socialist can be elected president of a capitalist country. On the other hand, if Sanders loses the nomination, his rabid followers are likely to blame the Democratic establishment and forsake loyalty to the party altogether (...). The lesson of the Trump presidency is that character counts at least as much as policy. America doesn't need a policy revolutionary. It needs decency. It needs a mensch in the White House. A mensch with the wisdom to hear all voices and the spine to make difficult decisions. Bernie Sanders is no mensch. He's a cranky idealist hell-bent on pushing his utopian socialist agenda –

and "healing the country" is not on that agenda. He's exploiting the rage at Trump to trigger the kind of class warfare that spreads even more animosity and division. Sanders is just the most extreme expression of a phenomenon that has plagued the Democrats: They've allowed their fury at Trump to turn them into a crisis party. In their near panic at the prospect of losing another election, they've thrown the kitchen sink at Trump and the American voters hoping something would stick. But in the process, they've missed the real crisis: We are a deeply divided nation in desperate need of a courageous leader who will embrace the challenge to Make America One Again. (...)

David Suissa, IHY, 17.02.20

Sorry, but Bernie Sanders is no Zionist

Now that the Democratic Party nomination is completely up in the air, one must contemplate the real possibility that socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders, who may have the most delegates going into this summer's convention, could be the Democratic nominee and profoundly influence the Democratic Party's platform. (...) he is close to being the standard-bearer of the party. In response, some mainstream pro-Israel Democrats have formed the Democratic Majority for Israel to support the US-Israel alliance. They are concerned because Sanders wants to make military aid to Israel contingent on Israel acquiescing to Palestinian demands, while diverting aid from Israel to Gaza. They worry because weakening Israel hurts American national security interests. As liberals, they are concerned that Bernie remains silent while some of the people he supports, and who support him, traffic in antisemitic and anti-Zionist proposals and falsehoods. To insulate Bernie from detractors who charge his associates dabble in anti-Israel rhetoric and use antisemites as advisers and surrogates to speak on his behalf, his PR people have been busily spinning his image and Jewish ancestry. (...) Yet, Sanders's campaign manager, Faiz Shakir, and foreign policy adviser, Matt Duss, were accused of antisemitism while working for the progressive think-tank Center for American Progress, according to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee. His fervent supporters like Rep. Ilhan Omar, whom he allows to speak on his behalf, have long ago crossed the line into antisemitism with their views of the Jewish state. Omar's antisemitism reaches beyond Israel into old time antisemitic tropes on Jewish power and money. Bernie is silent because nobody in his base would want him to call

out a woman of color. (...) This is not a “team of rivals” with Bernie being the Zionist. It is a monolithic group of anti-Israel activists in a Sanders administration. (...) Living on a Communist kibbutz 60 years ago, being born to Jewish parents or having a Jewish last name does not make you pro-Israel. Being Jewish doesn’t give you greater legitimacy to be a critic of Israel. (...) So the question must be asked, can anyone who cares about the survival of the Jewish state and the US-Israel relationship, trust Sanders to change his spots and vote for him?

Eric R. Mandel, JPO, 19.02.20

Does Bernie Sanders really have a 'principled, progressive' foreign policy?

(...) Bernie Sanders (...) argues that the United States must resist the "rise of a new authoritarian axis" everywhere from Moscow to Jerusalem, Budapest to Beijing to Brasilia. (...) But Sanders didn't explain how he would wage this fight. He called for a rejection of xenophobia and racism in the United States, the more judicious deployment of American force, and a greater reliance on diplomacy and other forms of international cooperation. He also demanded international action on climate change, attacked the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and defended the Iran nuclear deal – exactly what any mainstream Democrat would do. (...) But understanding the scope of the challenge and confronting it are two very different things. How is Sanders going to combat corruption in other countries? How is he going to reform the U.N., reduce inequality outside the United States, and mobilize democratic forces against authoritarianism? (...) Sanders and Trump are both constantly telling us how badly they want to "end the endless wars," including the United States' involvement in Syria. Despite the fact that 800,000 Syrians have been displaced in three months as the brutal siege of Idlib continues, Sanders no longer appears to be concerned about mass murder and displacement. He told the Washington Post he'd be "open" to reopening diplomatic relations with Bashar Assad because "diplomatic engagement does not imply approval of him or his activities." So who would be sitting in the Situation Room in a moment of crisis? The Sanders who was willing to use American force to stop a war criminal responsible for "ethnic cleansing, mass murder, rape, and the forced evacuation of hundreds of thousands of innocent people from their homes" in Kosovo? Or the Sanders who is prepared to normalize, at least formally, the war criminals in Syria guilty of doing the exact same thing on a much greater scale? (...) If Sanders is

really committed to anti-authoritarianism, why was his main ally in the global progressive movement an apologist for anti-Semites and theocrats? How does his two-state commitment chime with Corbyn's description of terrorist rejectionists Hamas and Hezbollah as dedicated to "long-term peace and social justice and political justice"? And what kind of progressive makes Linda Sarsour – a fan of the Nation of Islam who thinks "nothing is creepier than Zionism" – a surrogate for his campaign? Imagine if Sanders tried to take a harder line on Israel as president – his opponents would relentlessly seize upon these connections to discredit him, and they would have a point. (...)

Matt Johnson, HAA, 23.02.20

“Dear Bernie” & Israel

(...) I will cast my vote for presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. (...) he has the broadest perspective (...) for the needs of the world and the role that the US should play as the only country that can lead the planet into a better future. (...) Bernie labeled himself as a Democratic Socialist, like Leon Blum, Willie Brandt, Tony Blair, Francois Mitterrand, and Israel's Prime Ministers David Ben Gurion, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres, to name a few. He is not such a terrible company. But in Americans' minds, the word “Socialism” is associated with the Soviet Union, Castro's Cuba, and today's Venezuela, not with Scandinavia's mixed-economy social welfare liberalism. Is he too old? Then why the majority of Millennials follow him? (...) The Millennials, who will be the future leaders, look for someone who can bring fundamental change to the long list of American unsolved problems. (...) I don't need political smiling to lead. I would agree that Elizabeth Warren has better emotional intelligence than all the other Democratic candidates, and I hope that Bernie chooses her for the presidential ticket. Still, to steer the direction for the next four years, Bernie is the right person. (...) He is not a friend of Israel? He is not a friend of Netanyahu's policies. He is well aware of Israel's security needs. Still, he is also aware that a solution must be found as soon as possible for the Palestinian problem. I think that the Geneva Plan is still the best, so far, and he will take a serious look at it. In tune with the following Notes on Architecture, a far-reaching “Marshal Plan-like” development for Gaza, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, in parallel to Israel's, could be the best approach to break the cycle of never-ending wars in the region.

Rick Meghiddo, TOI, 29.02.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

Antisemitismus beim belgischen Karnevalsumzug

The ugly antisemitism at the Aalst carnival

The ugly face of antisemitism was literally on display in Belgium this week. The annual carnival in the Belgian city of Aalst went ahead (...) with more and worse antisemitic tropes and themes than in the past. (...) Some revelers were dressed in Nazi uniforms. One participant held a sign with the “rules of the carnival,” including “no Jews,” “no joking with Jews,” “certainly not speaking the truth about the Jew” and “your drugs and black money will be for us.” In other words, this was an absolutely deliberate antisemitic assault. There is no way that these tropes and themes were accidentally or unintentionally insulting due to ignorance or a misunderstanding. It takes a very twisted mind to justify such blatant Jew-hatred as legitimate freedom of expression. All that can be said is that the mayor and citizens of Aalst, and all those who took part in the carnival, believe that this is their heritage and they have a right to be proud of it. Belgium is home to the European Union. (...) Tension between Israel and the EU has increased recently. (...) Belgium professes to be concerned about the welfare of children worldwide – but where is the concern for Israeli children? Only yesterday, thousands were forced to stay home from school after the heavy rocket onslaught from Gaza on the South of Israel. Israeli children were running for shelters as Aalst was celebrating its carnival. A country that is truly concerned about children and the future would not permit the poisoning of minds that was shamefully on display in Aalst this week. Belgium should be ashamed that such a parade of antisemitism, bigotry and hatred took place on its soil. The world last month marked 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz. The Aalst carnival shows that the lessons of where Jew-hatred leads have not yet been learned.

Editorial, JPO, 24.02.20

Nachruf auf Hosni Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak kept the peace with Israel

Muhammad Hosni Mubarak died on Tuesday. He was 91. The man who had presided over the destiny of Egypt for three decades – the longest period in his country’s history – before being ousted in the wake of the Arab spring, will be remembered as a

proud Egyptian. He loved his people and they loved him in return, in spite of his fall from grace. They are giving him a grand send off, with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi officiating at his funeral. Mubarak came to power after Anwar Sadat was assassinated on October 6, 1981. (...) Israel had begun the evacuation of the Sinai Peninsula in accordance with the peace treaty, and there were some who called for a halt of the process, fearing that the new president would not honor Sadat’s commitments. They were wrong. (...) Though he was not a visionary like Sadat and would probably not have taken the step to make peace with Israel, he knew only too well the devastation brought by war and had no incentive to start another cycle of violence when the country was in such a parlous state. (...) The Egyptian president steered a reasoned course, never being tempted by military or economic adventures. He kept the peace with Israel and maintained the stability of his country, all the while maneuvering to restore what he saw as Egypt’s rightful place in the Arab world. Relations with Israel were excellent. (...) Unfortunately, Mubarak did nothing to curb a press increasingly hostile to Israel and resorting at times to violent antisemitic diatribes. It was perhaps the cold peace that helped him dissolve the Arab boycott. (...) His greatest achievement was keeping the peace with Israel and having it accepted by Egyptians, in spite of many reservations. That peace may be cold, but no one wants to go through another conflict. Today, President Sisi is focusing in economic problems and has successfully implemented the reforms Mubarak feared so greatly. Egypt is resolutely committed to its people’s welfare through development. It can only do so because Mr. Mubarak was wise enough to understand that peace was the key.

Zvi Mazel, JPO, 28.02.20

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JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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